



Pondoland Revolt, taken by Eli Weinberg

## Peasants' Revolt

The National Democratic Revolution is based upon a clear understanding of objective, dynamic class politics. It proceeds from a class alliance against the oppressor class, towards the fullest possible national democracy.

There is an interrelationship between the underlying (objective) class realities and the subjective (conscious) organisational politics of democracy. In these posts, we have tended either to concentrate upon one side of this dialectical relationship, or the other.

The previous two parts of this series have been about the

deliberate organisation and mobilisation of the NDR in the 1940s and 1950s. This part is more about objective class realities, or in other words, about Political Economy. The next part will be about organised politics again, and then the final two parts will be of a more synthetic nature, dealing with both subject and object together.

Looking forward, the last revolutionary confrontation is bound to be between the big bourgeoisie and its gravedigger, which is the proletariat that the capitalist bourgeoisie must constantly bring into being. Yet it is far from the case that in the present time all other classes have died out in South Africa. For success, these other, relatively minor classes should be allies of the proletariat in the National Democratic Revolution.

Class alliance is essential for the isolation and defeat of the oppressor, so as to deny the oppressor the comfort of support, and conversely, to prevent the oppressor from isolating and defeating the working class. The politics of class alliance were practiced in Karl Marx's time and before that, in the Great French Revolution. Class alliances were again crucial in the Russian and the Chinese Revolutions of the 20th Century, to name but two out of many. The hammer-and-sickle emblem now used by the SACP was first used during the Russian Revolution of 1917, to signify class alliance between workers and peasants.

In order for a class alliance to be possible, the working class must be class-conscious, and so must the other classes be. The latter often need to be assisted by the working class and by the

intellectual partisans of the working class, the Communist Party. Yet there is rather little in the way of class-conscious literature about South Africa's large petty-bourgeois class, who are for the most part very poor people, and little of a directly political nature about the agricultural petty-bourgeoisie, who are the peasantry, or about the oppressors of the rural petty-bourgeoisie and peasantry, who are South Africa's bureaucratised feudal class.



Govan Mbeki

The classic exception to this intellectual famine is communist journalist and Rivonia trialist Govan Mbeki's [pictured] ["Peasants' Revolt"](#), published in 1964 (see the link below). Other works such as ["Landmarked"](#), by Cherryl Walker (Jacana, 2008) tell us that the huge misery of rural displacement and impoverishment has even up to now hardly been ameliorated, or turned in a sufficiently positive direction.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [The Peasants' Revolt, C8, Chiefs in the Saddle, Govan Mbeki.](#)
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